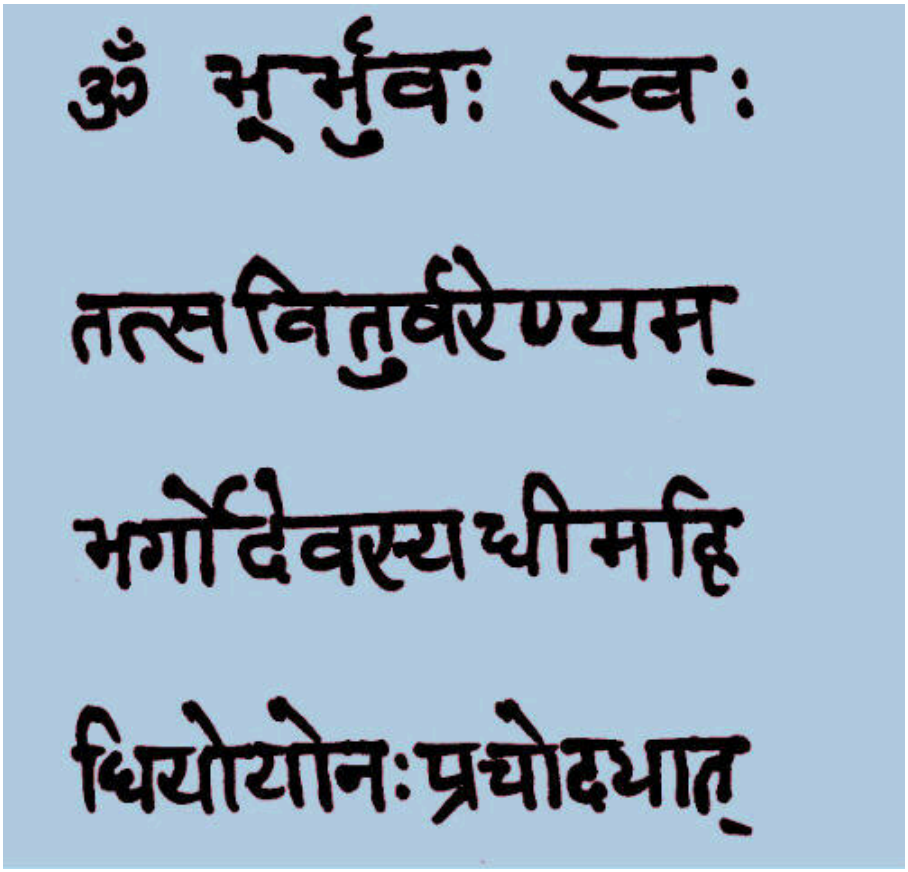
Gayatri Mantra

Gayatri Mantra (GUY-ah-tree) is one of the most known and beneficial of the ancient Sanskrit mantras. Gayatri is a mantra of physical, emotional, and mental healing, purifying the subtle karmas, protection from the onslaught of obstacles, and of spiritual awakening or Self-realization.



Aum Bhur Bhuva Svah
Tat Savitur Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi
Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayat

On the absolute reality and its planes,
On that finest spiritual light,
We meditate, as remover of obstacles
That it may inspire and enlighten us.

AUM/OM: Absolute reality. That which encompasses the three states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, represented by AUM, the three levels of gross, subtle, causal, the three levels of conscious, unconscious, subconscious, and the three universal processes of coming, being, and going. Absolute silence beyond the three levels is the silence after AUM.

Bhur: Physical realm or plane; earth.

Bhuva: The subtle or astral plane.

Svah: The higher, celestial plane.

Tat: That, the essential essence.

Savitur: Bright, luminous, sun-like, inner power of spiritual light, which brings one to Self-realization.

Varenyam: Finest, best, choicest, fit to be sought.

Bhargo: Destroyer of obstacles. Effulgence

Devasya: Divine, resplendent, shining

Dhimahi: We meditate.

Dhiyo: Our being of intelligence, intellect, understanding, mind/heart

Yo: Who, which

Naha: Our

Prachodayat: May enlighten, direct, inspire, guide, impel.

Meditation after Japa: When you practice japa (repetition) of the Gayatri mantra, whether pacing yourself with mala or a certain number of minutes, it is best to follow this with a few minutes of silent meditation, simply allowing an internal Om to lead to inner silence, with no words or syllables. Just quietly allow attention to rest on the breath at the nostrils, the heart, or the space between the eyebrows.

40 day practice

The period of 40 days has been widely recognized as an auspicious period both in the East and the West since ancient times. A traditional way to do an extended mantra practice is to choose a number of repetitions per day, and to do that for 40 days. The mind likes to have a beginning and end to a practice, a sense of completion, such as comes with a 40 day (or longer) practice.

Fixed time per practice session: Mind finds comfort in knowing that it will do the practice of one round of 108 repetitions of the beads on a mala (or some other number of rounds), and that each round will take a predictable amount of time (approximately 18 minutes per round of 108 repetitions, plus or minus).

Same number of rounds: Mind also likes the predictability of doing a certain number of rounds done per day. Mind may resist at times, but once it gets started in the practice, mind likes the habit.

Specific number of days: Mind also likes the plan of knowing how many days or months a practice will take to complete. This can be very beneficial in stabilizing a noisy mind, which is a common complaint.

Freedom in discipline: It has been said that there is freedom in discipline; choosing to do a regular practice frees the mind from wondering what practice will be done that day. It is also important not to do the mantra practice with rote repetition, but rather, with feeling and awareness.

Decide for yourself: By running your own experiment for 40 days, you can decide for yourself the degree to which the practice is beneficial.

Extended practice

Purascharna: A noticeable level of mantra siddhi (power of the mantra) is said to come with 125,000 repetitions of a mantra, Such an extended practice is called a purascharna. This is equivalent to 1250 rounds of a mala, traditionally counting 100 of the 108 beads.

Malas per day	Approximate minutes per day	Total days	Total months
1	18 min	1250	42
2	36 min	625	21
3	54 min	417	14
4	1 hr, 12 min	313	10 1/2
5	1 hr, 30 min	250	8 1/2
6	1 hr, 48 min	209	7
7	2 hr, 6 min	179	6

Stabilizing Mind: Such an extended practice with Gayatri mantra can have a tremendous effect in stabilizing the mind in preparation for advancing in meditation. Such a practice simply must be done personally to understand the benefits. It does take quite a commitment to do this practice every day for such a long period, but it is well worth the effort.

Have Stability: In choosing the level of practice per day, it is important to have stability from one day to the next, and to not skip any days. It is best to choose the level that works for you consistently, rather than changing the number from day to day. For example, if two rounds per day is a good number (34 minutes), then it's better to stay with that amount each and every day, not to do none on one day, but four on the next day.

Mahapurascharna: A very long japa practice is called Mahapurascharna (maha=great, large, or long). A mahapurascharna of Gayatri is. 2.4 million repetitions, or 24,000 malas. This practice is done mostly by swamis, sadhus, retired people, or people who have a great deal of time available. A 3-year practice will take about 20 malas per day, about 5-6 hours per day. Do the math with your calculator.

This practice is nothing less than profound, and is best done with ongoing, regular contact with a yogi who has already completed this practice, as it has a tremendous purifying effect when the unconscious starts to comes forward; it is best to have somebody to talk with about your experiences.